

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBSSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5340

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, PGOV

SUBJECT: REMARKS OF SOVIET CHARGE ANATOLIY GROMYKO

1. AT LUNCH ON FEB 26 WITH THE DECM, SOVIET CHARGE
ANATOLIY GROMYKO COMMENTED INTER ALIA ON FORIEGN POLICY
ASPECTS OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH TO THE PARTY CONGRESS,
FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT TO CHINA, AND THE DOMESTIC
POLITICAL SCENE IN THE US.

2. GROMYKO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT LONG AND CAREFUL PREPARATION
HAD GONE INTO DRAFTING THE BREZHNEV SPEECH, HE UNDER-
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SCORD BREZHNEV'S STRONG CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR DETENTE,

AND SAID HE ASSUMED WE HAD NOTICED THE FRIENDLY AND NON-POLEMICAL TREATMENT OF THE US. HE SAID BREZHNEV'S SPEECH REPRESENTED CONTINUITY IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY. WITH REGARD TO CHINA "A DOOR HAS BEEN LEFT OPEN" FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS. GROMYKO EMPHASIZED THAT BREZHNEV IS IN GOOD HEALTH FOR A MAN OF HIS AGE, DESPITE PROBLEMS HE HAS EXPERIENCED WITH HIS TEETH. ALTHOUGH THE PARTY CONGRESS WOULD BRING ABOUT A FEW CHANGES IN PERSONNEL, IT WAS NOT HIS OPINION THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP. GROMYKO CONCLUDED THAT WHILE THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CONGRESS FOR THE SOVIET UNION NO SURPRISES SHOULD BE EXPECTED. THE THEME, RATHER IS TWO-FOLD: A DEMAND FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE IN CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY; AND FOR SUPPORT OF THE GENERAL LINES OF SOVIET POLICY IN ALL AREAS. THE SOVIET UNION, HE ALLEGED, ENCOURAGES CRITICISM AS LONG AS THE SYSTEM ITSELF IS NOT ATTACKED. FOLLOWING BREZHNEV'S SPEECH, MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN BERLIN HAD SENT MOSCOW A TELEGRAM OF SUPPORT.

3. GROMYKO WAS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT TO CHINA, OBSERVING THAT IT IS TAKING PLACE NOT ONLY DURING THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY, BUT ALSO WHILE THE SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS IS IN PROGRESS. HE DESCRIBED MAO AS "SENILE AND IRRATIONAL". CONCERNING THE TIMING OF THE VISIT, GROMYKO CONCLUDED THAT SOME ILL-INFORMED CHINESE DIPLOMAT IN WASHINGTON MUST HAVE BEEN PROVIDING PEKING ADVICE ON MR. NIXON'S TRIP. GROMYKO, HOWEVER, SUBSEQUENTLY EMPHASIZED THAT THERE WERE MANY ASPECTS OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S FOREIGN POLICY THAT HAD BEEN OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND THAT HIS COUNTRY APPROVED.

4. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW TO DISCUSS SALT II HAD BEEN VERY CONSTRUCTIVE, GROMYKO SAID, AND PROVIDED HOPE THAT AN AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED, HE ASKED IF SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD BOOST PRESIDENT'S FORD'S STANDING IN THE US, TO WHICH THE DCM REPLIED THAT NOT ONLY WOULD THIS BE THE CASE BUT THE

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WORLD WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN AS WELL. GROMYKO THEN ASKED WHETHER IT WAS CORRECT, AS HE HAD READ IN THE WESTERN PRESS, THAT MR. SONNENFELDT HAD LOST HIS WATCH TO BREZHNEV. IF SO, HE HOPED HIS FRIEND SONNENFELDT WOULD GET IT BACK SOON, I.E. AT THE TIME OF AGREEMENT ON SALT II.

5. ON ANGOLA, GROMYKO SAID IT WAS SOVIET POLICY TO

SUPPORT NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS WHEREEVER THEY OCCURED.
HE WAS DEFENSIVE ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF CUBAN SOLDIERS AND THEIR
USE OF SOVIET WEAPONS, BUT
SAID IN RESPONSE TO THE DCM'S CRITICISM "WHO ELSE
WAS TO GIVE THEM ARMS?" HE DID NOT COMMENT ON CUBAN TROOPS.

6. GROMYKO ASKED ABOUT THE RECENT VISIT OF GENERAL HAIG
TO EAST BERLIN, WANTING TO KNOW WHETHER THIS SERVED,
IN PART, TO UNDERSCORE ALLIED VIEWS ON THE STATUS OF
BERLIN AS A WHOLE. WHEN GROVE RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY,
GROMYKO SAID THIS REPRESENTED A DIFFERENCE IN
PERSPECTIVE, AS HIS COUNTRY HAD GIVEN UP ITS CLAIM TO
A SOVIET SECTOR IN BERLIN.

7. GROMYKO WAS PERPLEXED ABOUT THE POLITICAL SCENE IN
THE US ON THE DAY OF THE RESULTS OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRI-
MARY. THE DCM DID HIS BEST TO PROVIDE INTERPRETATION.
GROMYKO EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO CONTINUE THE SPIRIT OF
VLADIVOSTOK IN US/SOVIET RELATIONS. HE WAS STRONGLY
CRITICAL, AS HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST, OF FOREIGN POLICY
STATEMENTS BY SENATOR JACKSON.

8. GROMYKO EXPRESSED DISTRESS AT THE CRITICISM IN THE
US OF SECRETARY KISSINGER. GROVE EARLIER HAD GIVEN HIM
THE TEXT OF THE SECRETARY'S SAN FRANCISCO SPEECH OF
FEB 3. GROMYKO SAID HE HAD READ THIS SPEECH
CAREFULLY AND AGREED WITH "ALMOST ALL OF IT."
APPROVING IN PARTICULAR ITS "REALISM." COOPER

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